



July 7, 2023

Dear Secretaries Raimondo and Haaland,

On behalf of our organizations and companies, we would like to thank you for your commitment to advancing responsible offshore wind that will help address the climate crisis and in doing so protect the health of our ocean and coastal communities. As U.S. offshore wind accelerates, protection of marine mammals is a critical issue to address and we urge federal engagement to ramp up the review, approval, and implementation of whale monitoring technologies as avoidance and minimization measures. We encourage the leadership of the Departments of Commerce and Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to participate in discussions to develop ways to independently verify technologies to detect and avoid whales in real time, and ensure that these alternative methods offer strong protections. New monitoring technologies present key opportunities to enhance marine mammal protections while expediting the permitting process. This, in turn, can help ensure that offshore wind projects, which face a number of technical and economic hurdles that can delay and imperil deployment, remain on schedule and are permitted in a commercially viable manner in order to meet President Biden's ambitious offshore wind goals.

The Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind (RWSC) would serve as an excellent venue to identify performance metrics for monitoring and mitigation technologies. RWSC is a multi-sector collective created and defined by federal agencies, states, conservation organizations, and offshore wind developers. Its mission is "to collaboratively and effectively conduct and coordinate relevant, credible, and efficient regional monitoring and research of wildlife and marine ecosystems that supports the advancement of environmentally responsible and cost-efficient offshore wind power development activities in U.S. Atlantic waters." The body's Technology Subcommittee hosts a cross-section of offshore

wind experts including NOAA and BOEM scientists and Department of Energy (DOE) staff who can help identify ways to independently verify trusted, efficient alternative monitoring methods.

ACP intends to host a summit in late August or early September to kick off an accelerated review of technologies working through the RWSC, and invites Departments of Commerce and Interior and NOAA and BOEM leadership to participate. The goals of this summit would be to highlight how advancing these technologies offers the potential to address permitting challenges while still protecting marine mammals, to chart a path forward for the commercial deployment of these technologies in offshore wind projects, and to detail RWSC's work to advance these goals.

Following the summit, we plan to work with RWSC to hold a regular series of workshops aimed at developing a comprehensive process by which these technologies can be validated in a timely manner so they could potentially be deployed for the construction and operation of offshore wind farms currently under environmental review. The workshops would align with key objectives in RWSC's recently published draft Science Plan (<https://rWSC.org/science-plan>), and workshop participants would include representatives from NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service, BOEM, DOE, the offshore wind industry, environmental NGOs, and academia.

Offshore wind developers have been funding studies on marine mammal monitoring technologies for the better part of a decade, and government-funded and academic research initiatives have also advanced our understanding of the potential for acoustic and other monitoring technologies. It is now time to test and monitor the most promising technologies and implement those with proven effectiveness in support of mitigation measures in upcoming offshore wind energy projects. This is an opportunity to support further innovations that could significantly improve real-time information regarding marine mammal presence, thereby allowing for the implementation of more fine-tuned mitigation measures.

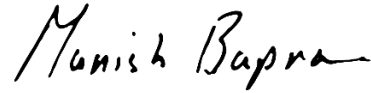
Crucially, these technologies and a framework for their implementation could provide agencies with more flexible and cost-effective tools in its current suite of mitigation measures. Advancing whale detection and mitigation technology for offshore wind also has the potential to increase marine mammal protection overall, as other maritime industries could benefit from new methods of real-time whale monitoring.

The undersigned organizations and companies agree that technological innovations have the potential to simultaneously advance marine mammal protection and support our nation's clean energy transition, enabling the U.S. offshore wind industry to reach or exceed the level of success it has achieved for decades in Europe and more recently in Asia. We look forward to working with you and your team to harmonize wildlife protection and the deployment of job-creating clean ocean energy that can help meet our national and global imperative to solve the climate crisis.

Sincerely,



Jason Grumet, CEO
American Clean Power Association



Manish Bapna, President and CEO
Natural Resources Defense Council



Collin O'Mara, President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation



Kacky Andrews, Chief of Strategy
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Stephanie McClellan, Executive Director
Turn Forward

Cc: John Podesta, White House Senior Advisor

Dr. Rick Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator

Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries

Tommy Beaudreau, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

Elizabeth Klein, Director, BOEM

Alejandro Moreno, Acting Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, U.S. Department of Energy